

through across-the-board spending cuts. The way to stimulate an economy is through tax breaks, not increases. I urge the President to start there.

SEATBELTS FOR INCREASED BUS SAFETY

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2009

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, most of us are aware of the bus accidents that have been occurring around the country. Two years ago there was a fatal bus accident involving the Westbrook High School girls' soccer team in Beaumont, Texas. Just this year, there was an accident in Sherman, Texas, which involved several Vietnamese community members. Similar incidents occurred in Liberty, Missouri, Arlington, Virginia, New York City, and New Orleans, to name a few.

These tragic bus accidents demonstrate that school bus safety reform is an urgent issue. While school buses are among the safest mode of transportation, these re-occurring accidents are unacceptable. School buses need to be safer.

The widespread bus crashes have sparked a comeback in the idea of seatbelts in buses. Seatbelts raise the issue of whether they would increase bus safety.

According to the Texas Department of Transportation, Texas safety belt use has topped 90%, this being the third year in a row. The majority of people in Texas are wearing their seatbelts in cars and trucks. But few to no passengers are wearing their seatbelts in school buses! Currently, there is no federal mandate on seatbelts in buses.

Every state, except New Hampshire, requires by law that car and truck drivers and passengers wear seatbelts. This is because seatbelts work—they increase a passenger's chance of survival in a crash. In short, seatbelts save lives.

If laws require passengers of cars and trucks to wear seatbelts, why are there no requirements for buses to even include seatbelts? In many states there are variations of "Click it or Ticket" policies that threaten motorists who don't wear seatbelts, yet no such laws apply to the buses that carry our children and community members on a daily basis.

Certainly, buses are made very different from cars and trucks. For one, buses can carry many more passengers than any car. Some of these differences might lead one to believe that there should not be a mandate on seatbelts in buses. These differences have not stopped bus drivers from being required to wear seatbelts. So why not for school bus passengers as well?

Some claim that seatbelts may not be properly worn by passengers or cause injury. If anything, it shows that seatbelts should be made better. However, to completely disregard seatbelts as a safety precaution is absurd.

The answer appears to be that of common sense. While seatbelts are in no way a quick fix and there are many questions surrounding seatbelts in buses, they should be looked into as one of the very many necessary measures taken to ensure school bus safety.

EARMARK DECLARATION

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2009

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, pursuant to the Republican guidelines on earmarks, I submit the following statement for the record regarding H.R. 1105, the Fiscal Year 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act.

Requesting Member: The Hon. FRANK R. WOLF.

Bill Number: H.R. 1105.

Provision: State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance, Byrne Justice Assistance Grant.

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force.

Address of Requesting Entity: One Park Center Court, Manassas Park, VA 20111.

Description of Request: In response to increasing gang activity in northern Virginia, a multi jurisdictional law enforcement task force was established in 2003 to more effectively respond to gang activity. As a result of the task force's efforts, criminal gang activity has declined by more than 50 percent. In order to sustain and maintain these impressive results, the task force requested \$2.5 million in funding, which is included in H.R. 1105.

Bill Number: H.R. 1105.

Provision: State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance, Byrne Justice Assistance Grant.

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Northwest Virginia Regional Gang Task Force.

Address of Requesting Entity: P.O. Box 49, Berryville, VA 22611.

Description of Request: In response to increasing gang activity in the Shenandoah Valley, this task force was established to coordinate and share information with their counterparts at the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the entire northern Virginia region is a hotbed of gang activity. In order to better fight gang activity in this area, the task force requested \$750,000 in funding, which is included in H.R. 1105.

Bill Number: H.R. 1105.

Provision: Capital Investment Grants.

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project.

Address of Requesting Entity: 1 Aviation Circle, Washington, D.C. 20001.

Description of Request: H.R. 1105 provides \$29.1 million to be used for extending the Metrorail system through Tysons Corner to Washington Dulles International Airport. Northern Virginia continues to be one of the country's fastest growing areas, but with that has come the distinction of being the second worst traffic congested region in America. Congressional funding to bring a much needed mass transit system linking the West Falls Church Metro station to Washington Dulles International Airport was first approved in FY 1999.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN A. YARMUTH

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2009

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to cast the recorded votes for rollcall Nos. 72,

73, and 74. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on H.R. 601: Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass; H.R. 44: Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass; and H.R. 911: Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass.

RECOGNIZING ALCALDESSA ELIZABETH KEMP OF SONOMA, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2009

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today, along with my colleague, LYNN WOOLSEY, to recognize Elizabeth Kemp, who has been named the City of Sonoma's 2009 Alcaldessa, or Honorary Mayor.

The title, "Alcalde" or "Alcaldessa" when referring to a woman, is the Spanish word for "Mayor." During the Spanish colonial period in California, the Alcalde was the primary civil authority. In modern times in the City of Sonoma, it is an honorary title and the contemporary Alcalde or Alcaldessa presides over ceremonial events for the city.

Alcaldes and Alcaldessas are nominated by the community and are representative of individuals with a long record of volunteer work. Ms. Kemp is no exception to this rule.

Ms. Kemp attributes her community activism to her early years in London during WW II. That experience led her to be aware of the needs of others and to an understanding that anyone's circumstances can change in a matter of minutes. She emigrated from England when she was 21 and has lived in Sonoma since 1969.

In 2000, Ms. Kemp recognized that many migrant workers had no place to live and were sleeping under bridges. She helped to organize one temporary camp, then joined with Vineyard Workers Services to create two more camps that are open during harvest. She currently serves as President of the Board of Directors of Vineyard Workers Services.

Ms. Kemp initiated the Brown Bagger program in 2004. The program prepares and distributes more than 180 nutritious lunches each week to the homeless and others who are unable to purchase food. This past summer, Ms. Kemp organized a group of volunteers to provide bag lunches to students who normally receive free lunches at school when school is in session and to their younger siblings. As a member of the Board of Directors of Sonoma Overnight Support, Ms. Kemp has also been involved in the development of the first permanent homeless shelter in Sonoma.

And, lest we think her interests are only parochial, Ms. Kemp is an active member of Friends of Turkana, a local group that raises funds for two medical missions in East Africa.

Madam Speaker, Elizabeth Kemp is a beloved and vitally important member of the community and it is appropriate that we acknowledge her today as Sonoma's Alcaldessa for 2009.